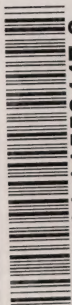


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# COLOMBIA

*A Guide  
for Canadian Exporters*



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# COLOMBIA

## *A Guide for Canadian Exporters*

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# *I. The Country*

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Colombia covers an area of 1,141,748 square kilometres and is situated southeast of Panama. It has coastlines on both the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean and borders Venezuela, Brazil, Ecuador and Peru. The country is divided into the north coast zone, the plains (Llanos) and the Amazon region by three chains of the Andes. The population is concentrated mainly in the more temperate regions of the plains and the north coast.

## History and government

The 300 year old Spanish colony of Nueva Granada on the South American continent established its independence under the leadership of Simon Bolivar after a series of battles with Spain during the period 1810-1819. In 1819, the Republic of Gran Colombia, which included present day Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador and Panama was established with Bogota as its provisional capital. Ecuador, Venezuela and Panama seceded by 1903.

The early part of the twentieth century was stable in Colombia compared with the turbulent decades of civil war and insurrection in the previous century. From the late 1940s to 1957 however, Colombia was wracked by *La Violencia*, an undeclared civil war between the Liberals and the Conservatives in which 300,000 people were killed. Finally in 1958, the two factions agreed to form a coalition government under the terms of which the presidency alternated between the two parties every four years. Key executive positions including Cabinet posts and elected legislative seats were by agreement divided between the two parties.

Open elections were reinstituted in 1974. The Liberals won two four-year Presidential terms but lost power to the Conservative administration headed by President Belisario Betancur in August 1982.

Colombia enjoys a relatively stable presidential democracy. Several institutional features are analogous to the U.S. governmental system, including a separation of powers among the executive, the legislative and the judicial branches; a bicameral Congress consisting of the Senate and the House of Representatives; and a strong two-party system.



The government is in firm civilian control. The armed forces are specifically prohibited by the constitution from participating in political activities. Colombia has been able to achieve economic success and to maintain a civilian democratic regime in the face of many economic and political problems that have caused governments to collapse elsewhere.

## The People

The estimated population in Colombia in mid-1981 was 27.32 million with an annual growth of about 2.3 per cent. Almost 90 per cent of the population lives in the western half of the country, in the temperate valleys, the highland plateaux of the Andes and on the Caribbean seaboard. Fifty-eight per cent of the population is Mestizo of mixed Spanish-Indian blood, 20 per cent is Caucasian, 14 per cent is Mulatto, four per cent is Negro, three per cent is Negro-Indian and one per cent is Indian.

Bogota is the political capital of the country and one of the most important industrial and commercial centres. The city's population of 4.8 million is growing at a rate of about one quarter million persons per year.

There are 20 cities in Colombia with more than 100,000 inhabitants. The main centres, other than Bogota, include:

City	Population (1979 estimate)
Medellin	1,589,000
Cali	1,500,000
Barranquilla	1,000,000
Bucaramanga	891,000
Pereira	460,000
Cartagena (plus industrial area of Mamonal)	453,000
Manizales	300,000

## Language

Spanish is the spoken and commercial language of Colombia. Many businessmen speak or understand English and, to a lesser degree, French.

## Religion

Ninety-six per cent of the population is Roman Catholic. Synagogues and Protestant churches are found in major cities.

## **General Information**

### **Climate**

In Colombia, climatic conditions vary widely from tropical on the coasts and in the jungle areas to temperate in the mountains. Although close to the equator, altitude has a marked effect on temperatures which are cool in Bogota at 2600 metres, and become progressively higher in Medellin at 1600 metres, Cali at 1000 metres and Barranguilla at sea level.

### **Health Precautions**

Visitors should take precautions against the risk of stomach upsets due to changes in diet and water. Gastro-intestinal infections in tropical zones are also relatively common.

Some discomfort such as insomnia, shortness of breath, dizziness may be experienced during the first few days of a visit to high altitude areas, particularly Bogota which also has a growing air pollution problem. Persons with medical histories of lung or heart conditions should consult their doctors before planning a trip to the higher altitude cities.

The standard of medical and dental care in the main centres of Colombia is fairly high. Services for visitors are often available in private clinics.

### **Currency**

The local currency is the peso. All foreign exchange must be purchased from, or sold to, the Banco de la Republica with respect to imports, exports and remittances. The exchange rate is set daily by the Banco de la Republica. In June 1983, the official exchange rate was U.S. \$1.00 = 78 pesos with a higher value on the black market.

Canadian visitors are advised to carry travellers cheques in U.S. dollars and U.S. currency because not all banks are familiar with conversion rates on the Canadian dollar. It is wise to retain exchange slips in case it be necessary to convert pesos back into dollars.

The better known credit cards are accepted at many hotels, restaurants and gift shops.

### **Baggage**

Reasonable quantities of personal effects accompanying passengers are admitted duty free. Unaccompanied bag-



gage, however, is often subject to difficult and slow clearance.

## Clothing

Canadian spring-fall clothing is usually suitable, although it can be uncomfortably warm and humid at lower altitudes in Colombia, particularly on the coasts. At higher altitudes it can be quite cool at night. As Bogota experiences rain showers during much of the year, a lightweight raincoat or umbrella is advisable.

Dark suits are usual for business calls and socializing in Bogota and Medellin, while warmer altitudes often dictate less formal wear.

Formal men's wear is not usually required but can be rented if necessary. For women, long skirts are suitable for evening.

## Measures

The metric system is used in Colombia. Certain Spanish weights may be used on a local basis.

## Electricity

The supply of electricity varies from region to region including in Bogota. The country is in the process of standardizing the supply to 110-125 volts, 60 cycles AC.

## Local Time

Colombian time coincides with Central Standard Time in Canada.

## Business Hours

Commercial offices are generally open from 0830-1200 (8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.) and from 1400-1730 or 1800 (2:00 p.m. - 5:30 or 6:00 p.m.). Banks and some commercial offices have recently adopted to work through the day from 0800 (8:00 a.m.) to 1630 or 1700 (4:30 p.m. or 5:00 p.m.) with a small break for lunch. Stores are usually open until 1900 (7:00 p.m.) from Monday through Saturday although some close Saturday afternoons.

## Holidays

The following is a list of official public holidays in Colombia:

New Year	- January 1
Epiphany	- January 6
Saint Joseph's Day	- March 19
Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday	- March or April
Labour Day	- May 1
Ascension Thursday	- May
Corpus Christi	- June
Sacred Heart	- June 10
Saint Peter and Saint Paul	- June 29
Independence Day	- July 20
Battle of Boyaca	- August 7
Assumption of Our Lady	- August 15
Columbus Day	- October 12
All Saints Day	- November 1
Independence of Cartagena	- November 11
Immaculate Conception	- December 8
Christmas	- December 25

All banks usually close on June 28 to 30 and December 29 to 31 (or closest work days thereto), subject to Banking Commission regulations.

The Canadian Embassy additionally observes Canada Day on July 1.

The traditional vacation periods in Colombia are from mid-December to mid-January and to a lesser extent, the month of August. Business appointments may be difficult to arrange during these periods.

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## *II. Economic Information*

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The Colombia economy in 1982 registered a low GDP growth rate estimated at 1.5 per cent, compared with growth rates between 4 and 8.9 per cent per annum for the previous five years. The economically active population exceeds 8 million, of which some 27 per cent are employed in agriculture and 25 per cent in industry. Unemployment in the four major cities was 9.3 per cent in 1982 compared with 8.2 per cent a year earlier. The 1982 preliminary figures for the inflation rate stood at 24.8 per cent compared with 27.5 per cent in 1981.

Total gross national product (GNP) was estimated at U.S. \$41.1 billion with a GNP per capita evaluated at U.S. \$1,490 in 1982. Based on preliminary statistics, Colombia's 1982 exports decreased while imports climbed to produce a deficit of U.S. \$2 billion — the largest commercial deficit in Colombia's history. The main factor in this decline was a drop in coffee sales due to lower international prices and shipments. Nevertheless, with its foreign reserves of over U.S. \$4 billion, enough to cover all of its short term debt, Colombia in 1983 probably enjoys the best credit rating in South America.

In order to restore economic growth, the new Conservative government is determined to increase production, make more credit available and restrict imports of certain goods, i.e., food, textiles. Construction and housing together with the energy, mining and transportation sectors are priorities for the administration.

### **Major Economic Sectors**

#### **Agriculture**

The Colombian economy relies principally on the production of coffee (U.S. \$2 billion per year). Fifty per cent of the country's export revenues originate from the exportation of coffee of which Colombia is the second largest producer in the world. Bananas, cotton fibre, cut flowers and sugar are the most important cash crops after coffee. Cocoa, tobacco, rice, maize, wheat, sorghum, beans, African palm, and potatoes are other leading crops. A large proportion of the cereals consumed in Colombia has to be imported. The rate of increase in agricultural production is slightly higher than the rate of population growth.

Although the development plan of the country places a high priority on the agricultural sector, little progress has been made in agrarian reform.

## Manufacturing

Colombia's industrialization initially followed an import substitution policy, but since 1967, there has been a growing emphasis on export promotion. The manufacturing sector accounts for slightly over 18 per cent of GNP and employs 25 per cent of the urban labour force, which in 1981 produced manufactured exports worth almost U.S. \$1.2 billion. Industry is highly concentrated around Bogotá, Cali and Medellín, although attempts are being made to develop it in other areas. Food, beverages and tobacco account for about 28 per cent of manufacturing value added while the textile industry, of which pure cotton is the most important single product, contributes some 13 per cent. The chemical industry now rivals textiles and foodstuffs in importance with over 400 production facilities and over seven per cent of the total manufacturing labour force. The motor vehicle assembly industry provides employment for some 12,000 people and contributes about 28 per cent of the gross value of output of the manufacturing sector. As there has been limited expansion of plants in the late 1970s, major new investment in steel, pulp and paper, cement, fertilizers, rubber and petrochemicals will be necessary if manufacturing is to maintain its share of GNP.

## Energy

Although an exporter of crude oil in 1970, such exports ceased in 1974 and by 1981 Colombia was importing up to 80,000 barrels per day. With renewed oil exploration, however, important new oil fields were discovered. This energy reserve could make Colombia self-sufficient in crude petroleum once again and might also provide an export surplus by the late 1980s. Important discoveries of natural gas were made in the mid-1970s and since then production has grown steadily. Colombia also has one of the highest untapped hydroelectric potentials in the world, and has a major program underway to bring this power on stream.

## Mining

The country has the largest coal reserves in Latin America which are variously estimated at between 10 and 40 billion tons. Precious metal extraction especially of gold, silver and platinum has registered significant growth at a rate of

four per cent per annum in the past years. Colombia remains the world's major source of emeralds. The nickel mining project, Cerro Matoso, which started production in June 1982, has reserves estimated at about 40 million tons, and export earnings from nickel are forecast at U.S. \$30 million a year.

## Opportunities for Canadian Business

Colombia's 1981-1984 development plan contains 117 public investment projects valued at approximately U.S. \$21 billion, many of which are in fields of strong Canadian capability. Despite a temporary 32 per cent cut-back in the 1983 investment budget, most of these projects are expected to be implemented, although some will be postponed.

A significant amount of capital will be required over the next five years in the field of power generation and transmission. Hydroelectric projects valued at U.S. \$10 billion are planned, increasing current capacity of 4,200 MW to 11,200 MW by 1990. Best prospects for this sector include: hydroelectric turbines, generators, transformers, back up diesel generators, emergency lighting, high tension transmission systems, distribution and control systems for commercial and private building projects.

Housing and construction will also offer good opportunities for Canadian companies. Construction license approvals in 1981 were up 18.7 per cent nationally and up 22.4 per cent in Bogota over 1980 approvals. National highway development plans call for the expansion and improvement of 50,000 kilometres of roads. The World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank are financing some of these projects.

Colombia also has major plans to modernize and centralize its communication sector. It is re-examining its plan to launch its own communications satellite (SATCOL) and construct 156 ground receiving stations, a satellite control network and install equipment to link the satellite with existing communications facilities. Should it decide against launching its own satellite it is expected to participate in a regional one. Planned investments are scheduled to total over U.S. \$620 million from 1981 to 1985 for expanded domestic service in telephone, television, telex, telegraph, radio program distribution and data transmission.

Transportation in the form of railroad expansion and rehabilitation, modernization of ports, highway construction,



airport renovations and aircraft, will require more than one billion dollars. In the same sector, investments in mass transportation systems for Bogota and Medellin are expected to cost close to U.S. \$2 billion. A request for tenders for a mass transportation system for Medellin was called in February 1983; that for Bogota is expected in late 1983 or early 1984.

Other significant expenditures are planned for petroleum exploration and exploitation, for industrial plants, agro-industrial projects, irrigation, water and sewage systems as well as for education and medical projects.

The agricultural sector also offers opportunities. The present administration is expected to set new incentives and policy for agricultural producers including better credit conditions, reduced import duties for agricultural equipment and more effective government assistance. The best prospects for Canadian sales exist for tractors, harvesters, dust sprayers and equipment for soil testing and irrigation.

It is expected that private investment in Colombia, while not as large as government efforts, will also be attractive as the country continues its attempts to increase its non-traditional exports, to lower its dependence on coffee. Such proposed investments include the construction of cement plants, fertilizer complexes, pulp and paper projects, sponge iron production, caustic soda plants, the expansion of present manufacturing capabilities in petrochemicals and a number of commercial and institutional building projects, i.e. hotels, houses, hospitals, office towers.

This is, of course, does not cover the complete list. Rather it only provides an indication of whether or not your products could find a niche in this growing market. For more information, we suggest you contact the Trade Commissioner in Bogota or the South America Division, Office of Trade Development, External Affairs in Ottawa (see Useful Addresses).

## Foreign Investment

Colombian Government policy toward foreign investment has been traditionally favourable. In recent years however, this policy has gradually become more restrictive and the formation of regional groups such as the Andean Common Market which implies commitments by member countries for joint decisions on crucial matters, such as the treatment of foreign investment, has contributed to this

change. In the future, foreign capital in Colombia will be required to accept a minority position. The annual limit of profit remittances is 20 per cent of capital; a maximum additional reinvestment of 7 per cent of profits is authorized. The nickel, coal and aluminum sectors waive the 20 per cent profit transfer. Petroleum also has a special legal regime.

Foreign direct investments must be registered with the Exchange Office, and capital imports with the National Planning Department, plus the Ministry of Mines and Energy if necessary. Foreign banks must have majority Colombian participation. New foreign direct investment in banks, insurance companies and other financial institutions is restricted to companies, of Andean Pact member nations.

As a start towards controlling industrial pollution, foreign companies are barred from establishing new plants in the immediate areas of Bogota, Medellin and Cali. This restriction may be extended to include expansions to current facilities and domestic controlled industries.

There are several duty free industrial areas in Colombia namely, at Palmasica (near Cali), Barranquilla, Cartagena and Cucuta (on the border with Venezuela) which offer special advantages to industrial investors, particularly where exports are concerned — and at Leticia in Amazonas where the borders of Colombia, Brazil and Peru meet.

## Foreign Trade

Colombia became a full member of the GATT in 1981, and is a member of the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI) and the Andean Common Market (ANCOM) — officially a sub-regional group of ALADI. Generally, Colombia follows ANCOM's foreign investment code and transfer of technology rules, as well as its automatic tariff-cutting program.

Coffee is the principal export commodity. Exports of manufactured and non-coffee agricultural products have increased in the last few years but not enough to significantly increase their share of total revenues. Exports in 1980 exceeded those of 1979 by 12.9 per cent (coffee 17.3 per cent), to U.S. \$4.1 billion, but dropped to U.S. \$3.13 billion in 1981 and to U.S. \$3.2 billion in 1982.

The United States is the main market for Colombia exports with a share of almost 22 per cent in 1981 followed by West Germany with 18.7 per cent.

During the 1976-1978 period, the average annual growth of imports was 25 per cent, fell to 18 per cent in 1979 and further to 16.9 per cent in 1980.

The 1981 imports were valued at U.S. \$4,789 million showing a decline of 4 per cent over the previous year but climbed by 8.1 per cent in 1982 to U.S. \$5,176 million. The United States continued to be Colombia's largest supplier with 32.9 per cent of total imports in 1981 followed by Japan with 9.5 per cent.

The following tables provide further information of Colombia's trade with other countries. The 1980 and 1981 figures are the latest available.

**Table 1** **Colombian Exports (f.o.b. value)**

	1980	1981	Change 1980-81	Share 1981
	(U.S. \$'000,000)		(%)	(%)
Coffee	2,360	1,420	-39.8	45.4
Bananas	180	119	10.2	3.8
Flowers	102	107	4.9	3.4
Cotton	102	91	-10.8	3.0
Sugar, molasses	202	76	-62.4	2.4
Meat	—	52	—	1.5
Clothing	258	48	-79.1	1.5
Precious, semi-precious stones	72	43	-40.3	1.4
Fuel oil	239	32	-84.5	1.0
Total (including others)	4,092	3,127	-23.6	100.00

Source: Annual supplement — the Economist Intelligence Unit

**Table 2** **Principal Destinations of Exports**

	1980	1981
	(per cent of total)	
United States	27.2	21.8
West Germany	18.9	18.7
Venezuela	7.7	12.8
Netherlands	5.9	4.4
Japan	3.8	4.5
Spain	3.8	2.8
Canada	2.4	2.7
European Economic Community	31.6	30.4

Source: Annual Supplement — The Economist Intelligence Unit

Table 3 Colombian Imports (f.o.b. value)

	1981 <sup>(1)</sup>
	(U.S. \$'000,000)
Fuel, petroleum derivatives	677
Mechanical equipment, boilers	797
Vehicles	517
Electrical machinery, equipment	330
Iron, steel products	312
Organic chemicals	388
Edible oils	151
Rubber, rubber products	191
Plastics	114
Total (including others)	4,789

(1) Comparative figures with 1980 are not available.

Source: Annual Supplement — The Economist Intelligence Unit

Table 4 Principal Sources of Imports

	1980	1981
	(per cent of total)	
United States	36.1	32.9
Japan	9.5	9.5
Venezuela	6.2	6.2
West Germany	6.9	8.5
Brazil	2.6	3.6
France	2.3	2.7
Spain	3.3	3.0
Canada	1.9	3.7
European Economic Community	14.4	14.5

Source: Annual Supplement — The Economist Intelligence Unit

## Canada-Colombia Trade

Canada-Colombia commercial relations are governed by the GATT and by a trade agreement signed in 1971 and ratified in 1977. Canada-Colombia exchange Most-Favoured-Nation (MFN) tariff treatment and Canada grants preferential tariff treatment to a broad range of Colombian goods under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP).

Canada's trade relations with Colombia are excellent. Although our bilateral trade was moderate throughout the 1970s, it has expanded rapidly over the past few years with Canada achieving a significant positive balance.

Canadian exports to Colombia reached Can. \$180 million in 1981 and Can. \$191 million in 1982. They include newsprint, motor vehicles and parts, aircraft and parts, plastics, barley, aluminum and a range of machinery and other fabricated goods. Recent contracts received by Canadian suppliers of mining trucks and equipment should significantly alter these figures in 1983 and 1984.

In 1982 Canadian imports from Colombia indicated a moderate growth of 10.3 per cent compared with 1981 figures, rising from Can. \$83.4 million to Can. \$92 million. Total Canadian imports from Colombia may, however, be much higher than these figures show, since a significant percentage of Canadian coffee purchases from Colombia are made through the United States. Coffee, bananas, cut flowers, fuel oil and textiles constitute the bulk of purchases from Colombia.



Table 5      Main Canadian Exports to Colombia

	1981	1982*
	(Can \$ '000.)	
Newsprint	42,044	35,692
Motor vehicles, engines, parts	30,094	35,817
Asbestos milled fibres, short lengths	7,085	15,817
Barley	14,240	14,679
Plastic, synthetic rubber, fabricated materials	6,683	11,401
Aircraft, engines, assemblies, parts	7,933	10,439
Polyethylene resins	7,741	5,509
Aluminum fabricated materials	7,667	5,163
Steel, fabricated materials	1,398	4,331
Wood pulp	4,247	3,382
Card punch sort tab computers, parts	2,270	3,163
Construction machinery, equipments	5,039	2,193
Industrial chemical specialties, explosives	3,251	2,034
Lentils, dried	—	2,031
Bird seed (canary)	230	1,788
Zinc blocks, pigs, slabs	793	1,618
Hoisting machinery	15	1,445
Groundwood printing paper	1,537	1,187
Total main commodities	142,267	157,689
Total all commodities	180,125	190,899
Main as % of Total	79.0	82.6

\*January to December 1982.

Source: Statistics Canada

Table 6            Main Colombian Exports to Canada

	1981	1982*
	(Can \$ '000)	
Coffee	32,983	34,558
Bananas, plantains, (fresh)	16,023	26,017
Fuel oil	13,257	9,394
Cut flowers, decorative plant materials	7,025	8,450
Raw sugar	—	2,513
Corduroys	4,933	2,052
Woven fabrics	1,933	1,940
Yarn	2,959	1,687
Total main commodities	76,113	86,611
Total all commodities	83,394	92,257
Main as % of Total	94.9	93.9

\*January to December 1982.

Source: Statistics Canada

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## *III. Business Information*

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### **Distribution**

Although Colombian law does not make it mandatory to have a local agent, it is customary for foreign exporters to appoint local business agents to act not only as sales promoters but also to assist customers, service accounts, undertake repairs and servicing and to secure prompt remittance of payment. It is mandatory however, for foreign suppliers to the Colombian public sector to be locally represented.

While many leading importers and agents have head offices in Bogota, others are located in the important cities of Barranquilla, Cali and Medellin. Depending on the product, it is often necessary to visit one or more centres outside of Bogota to see potential agents and, in particular, to call on clients.

### **Agency Agreements**

Agreements, and any modification or termination thereof, whereby a company maintains an agent for soliciting sales, must be registered with the Chamber of Commerce. The agency agreement must be drafted in accordance with Colombian law and certified by a Colombian consulate in Canada.

Agents must be supplied with credentials in Spanish, issued by the Canadian firm, registered in a Canadian Chamber of Commerce and certified by a Colombian consulate.

### **Advertising**

Colombia has a complete range of advertising facilities. An abundance of newspapers reach a wide audience. Bogota has four main papers, and every town of importance usually has two — one for supporters of each of the two main parties. Commercial radio stations reach an even larger portion of the population. The more affluent markets can be reached through television commercials or by short film clips in the movie theatres.

Company brochures and advertising material should be written in Spanish. Excellent local translation facilities are available. The name, complete addresses, telephone and telex numbers of the Canadian firm should be clearly displayed on all company material.

## Price Quotations

Prices are usually quoted c.i.f., f.o.b. or as required by the customer in U.S. dollars.

## Methods of Payment

Sales should be concluded on the basis of an irrevocable letter of credit. When a relationship has been established with the client, more flexible terms such as payment on arrival of goods could be implemented. Sales of major capital equipment may be financed through the Export Development Corporation or commercial banks. In no case should an exporter ship goods before receiving specific confirmation of purchase from the agent or buyer for the goods.

## Bank Facilities

There are 23 private commercial banks in Colombia, of which 16 are owned by Colombian interests, and 7 are jointly owned by Colombian and foreign interests and represent the "colombianization" of what were formerly foreign branches. There are in addition three government-owned commercial banks which specialize in finance to small coffee growers, small industry and cattle producers respectively.

There are two semi-official specialized banks. The Banco Central Hipotecario (Central Mortgage Bank) is a major source of credit for private housing and its operations are primarily financed by mortgage bonds. The Caja de Credito Agrario, Industrial y Minero (Agrarian Credit Bank), which holds over 40 per cent of all savings deposits in Colombia, primarily finances small farming operations.

The 24 finance development corporations, of which 18 are private, now play an important role in Colombian finance activities. These "financieras" are funded by term deposits, Central Bank lines of credit and World Bank and IADB co-financings with foreign commercial banks. They are allowed to undertake activities which include granting loans for up to 20 years, buying equity, issuing bonds, marketing bonds on a commission basis, financing of the purchase of fixed assets for the account of customers and issuing letters of credit. Loans are mostly made in the manufacturing, agriculture (including livestock), mining and the electrical sectors.

In addition, other financial institutions such as specialized savings and loan corporations and warehouse finance corporations, are found in Colombia.

## Credit Information and Debt Collection

Credit reports can be obtained on your behalf and at your cost by the Commercial Division, Canadian Embassy, Bogota.

Debt collection is a difficult legal procedure and can be avoided through caution in extending credit. A good local agent can help here, as can the Trade Commissioner. Legal procedures are lengthy and expensive and should be undertaken only as a last resort.

## Licensing, Joint Ventures, Patents, Trademarks and Designs

Licensing agreements may cover such diverse items as artistic, scientific and technical services or the use in Colombia of industrial property rights such as trademarks and patents. Since royalties or other types of fees will be paid from Colombia, the exchange control laws become relevant and all agreements must be registered with the exchange office of the Banco de la Republica.

In the case of licenses the Andean Pact Foreign Investment Rules must be considered. Under these rules the licensing agreement may not require the licensor to purchase equipment, raw materials or know-how from a specific source. The licensor cannot:

- set sale or resale prices;
- limit the licensee in the use of competitive technology or in export plans;
- insist on the payment of royalties for trademarks or patents not utilized;
- force the licensee to pay minimum annual royalties or fees.

All license agreements in Colombia for the use of a foreign patent, trademark, know-how, or technology must be registered with the Exchange Office of the Central Bank after approval by the Comité Nacional de Regalias (National Royalty Committee, a dependency of the Ministry of Economy Development.)

Manufacturers who intend to export their products to Colombia are advised to patent their inventions and register their trademarks in that country. The application should be made through a patent or trademark agent in Canada or Colombia.

Original patents are granted for a period of eight years, renewable for four additional years, if it can be demonstrated that the patent is being or has been used during



the last year of the preceding renewal period. Under the new Commercial Code confirmation patents are no longer available. Industrial designs and model protection can be obtained for the same terms as patents.

Trademark registrations are granted for a period of ten years from date of application and may be renewed indefinitely for periods of five years. Application for renewal must be made before the expiration of the registration.

Joint ventures (Cuentas en participacion) are not juridical matters in Colombia and, therefore, all legal responsibilities are assumed separately by each participant according to the respective business structure. Reporting responsibilities rest mainly with the participant appointed as operator in the joint venture agreement. This type of agreement is customary in Colombia almost exclusively in connection with petroleum exploration and mining activities.

## Trade Fairs

The only official international fair in Colombia is the Bogota International Fair, held by legal order every two years in even number years. The fair is managed by the government enterprise "Corporacion de Ferias y Exposiciones, C.A." whose Board of Directors is chaired by the Minister of Economic Development. The number of specialized exhibitions and fairs aimed at specific economic or industrial sectors, is increasing.

## Internal Transportation

Colombia has 75,000 kilometres of road of which 9,160 kilometres are paved. Most of the nation's dry cargo and passenger traffic is transported by road. The growth of traffic has been steady. Improvements in the road network have gradually eroded the share of traffic carried on Colombia's 2,600 kilometres of railway. The domestic air service has always had an important role in view of the communication problems posed by the mountainous terrain. Colombia has seven international airports and four national airlines providing regular internal and international flights.

## Addressing Correspondence

Send all correspondence by air mail! Surface mail takes several months and is not recommended. Correspondence in Spanish is a courteous gesture that is appreciated. Catalogues should be sent singly and should be marked "CATALOGOS SIN VALOR COMERCIAL". It is recom-

mended that catalogue wrappers contain no other markings: however if postal authorities insist, the small green customs form (Label 185) should be used.

## Documentation

Shippers must ensure that documents are forwarded to their importers by the fastest method, as soon as possible in all cases. According to Article 1 of a 1981 Colombian Customs Regulation, the importer or his agent must present the following documents, together with the Import Manifest, to Customs in order to clear goods:

- original of the import license and/or registration;
- original of the bill of lading or other transport document;
- original or copy of the commercial invoice;
- original or authenticated copy of import permits (Agriculture, Development, National Defence, etc) as may be required due to the nature of the goods imported;
- certificate of origin and any other document which may be required by virtue of International Conventions;
- document from the Banco de la Republic or such entity as that bank may designate, in which it is verified that a provisional deposit has been made to cover a stipulated list of taxes, fees, etc;
- receipt covering payment of any deposit made under terms of Resolution 45 of 1979; and
- any other documents required by law or regulation of the Colombian Government.

## Transportation Services to Colombia

*From Eastern Canadian Ports* — Saguenay Shipping Ltd., a Canadian shipping company, offers a fortnightly joint service with Flota Mercante Grancolombiana S.A. from Montreal and Saint John, New Brunswick, to Cartagena, Barranquilla, Buenaventura (Grancolombiana only), and Santa Marta in Colombia. Space accommodation is available for general cargo, refrigerated cargo, bulk liquids and containers. Saguenay has agency offices in Montreal, Toronto, Halifax and Saint John. Grancolombiana is represented by March Shipping Ltd. in those cities.

Great Lakes Transcaribbean Line, a Canadian shipping company, has a fortnightly service from Thunder Bay, Hamilton and Montreal/Valleyfield to Santa Marta, Cartagena and Buenaventura in Colombia. Accommodation is available for general cargo, refrigerated cargo, bulk liquids and containers. GLTC Line is represented in eastern Canada by Protos Shipping Ltd. in Toronto, Halifax and Montreal.

Cargos are also accepted on inducement by several lines including Peruvian State Line, Chilean Line and the two Canadian companies, Anship Ltd. and Jensen Shipping Line.

*From Canadian West Coast Ports* — Canadian Westfal-Larsen Line, a Canadian shipping company, serves the port of Buenaventura, Colombia, from Vancouver. Empire Shipping Co. Ltd. represents the line in Vancouver. Accommodation is available for general cargo, bulk liquids and containers.

Flota Mercante Grancolombiana S.A. operates from Vancouver to the port of Buenaventura, Colombia. The general agent for Grancolombiana is Beaufort Navigation (Western) Ltd. in Vancouver. The line offers accommodation for general cargo, refrigerated cargo and containers.

Delta Line sails from Vancouver to Buenaventura and Cartagena in Colombia. Its agent is Montreal Shipping Co. Ltd. The line accepts general cargo, bulk liquids and containers.

## Air Services to Colombia

There are no direct, scheduled air services from Canada to Colombia. Daily connecting flights to Colombia are available via Miami, Los Angeles, New York, other U.S. and Caribbean points and Mexico. The originating carriers are Air Canada, CP Air, Delta and Air Panama, Western and Aerocondor. Charter services for passengers and cargo are available on an 'as required' basis.

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## *IV. Import and Exchange Control Regulations*

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### **Import Controls**

There is no prohibited import list. Imports are classified either as goods subject to prior licensing by the Foreign Trade Institute (INCOMEX) or as licence-free goods subject to registration. In the latter category, there is a global free list applicable to all countries, a National List applicable only to member countries of the Latin American Integration Association (LAIA), and special lists applicable only to less developed member countries of the LAIA and to members of the Andean Pact.

When goods are subject to licensing, the issuance of such license signifies that the imports are eligible for import registration. Certain items are not normally issued import licenses; these include arms, habit-forming drugs, certain foodstuffs, certain textiles, garments and jewelry.

All imports whether or not an import license is required, must be registered for their f.o.b. port of shipment value with the Import Division of INCOMEX. The charge for import registration is approximately Col \$1,500. When registration application is accepted, the Import Division of INCOMEX issues an "Import Registration Certificate". Both import licences and registration certificates are valid for nine months.

### **Exchange Controls**

Pursuant to the basic legislation, Decree Law 444 of March 22, 1967, as amended, all foreign exchange operations are subject to control. Regulations require companies to use dollar-denominated exchange certificates (certificados de cambio), issued by the central bank and authorized credit institutions, when buying or selling foreign currencies.

When the importer applies for an exchange licence from the Exchange Office of the Banco de la Republica, through a commercial bank he submits, inter alia, one copy of the "Import Registration Certificate". However, prior to the exchange licence being approved and foreign exchange for remittance abroad obtained, an advance import payment deposit (depositas previo a la nacionalizacion de mercancias) of 35 per cent of the registered amount must be

made in Colombian currency with an authorized bank before customs clearance. Importers then receive non-negotiable, interest-free deposit certificates for foreign payments (titulos de deposito para pagos al exterior). There is also an advance exchange licence deposit (consignacion) which has to be made before applying for an exchange licence. The rate of deposit is 95 per cent of the value of the import. If the transaction is also subject to the advance import payment deposit of 35 per cent, this is counted as part of the deposit for the advance exchange licence.

## Tariffs and Import Taxes

Colombia adheres to the NABALALC and NABANDINA tariff nomenclatures. A few tariffs are prohibitively high, but manufactured goods as a whole face average rates of about 25 per cent.

Virtually all imports are subject to two additional ad valorem taxes; the first, to support the Export Promotion Fund (5 per cent of c.i.f. value) and the other, for the Coffee Promotion Fund (1.5 per cent of c.i.f. value). All imports (except newsprint) are subject to a stamp tax of 1 per cent of the f.o.b. value. This tax replaced the consular invoice tax of 1 per cent formerly collected by INCOMEX at the time of registration of foreign trade transactions. Special taxes are levied on such goods as cigarettes, cotton, wheat and playing cards. Finally, most imports are subject to a sales tax (none is applied to basic foods, drugs and publications) of 6 per cent for specialty foodstuffs and essentials, 15 per cent for general merchandise, and 35 per cent for luxury items. This tax is levied on the duty paid value.

Colombia has instituted a special import/export system known as the Plan Vallejo under which raw materials, machinery, equipment and other inputs for production can be imported into Colombia exempt from advance import deposit, import license requirements and customs duties, provided that the goods produced will be exported. Such imports must be covered by external credit and the company concerned must put up a bond valued at double the customs duties otherwise due and maintain special accounts open to inspection by government officials. Another scheme favours the import of capital goods to regions outside the large urban centres.



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## *V. Your Business Trip to Colombia*

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### Advise and Consult the Canadian Embassy

When planning business visits to Colombia, advise the Commercial Division of the Canadian Embassy well in advance by air mail (minimum three weeks) or telex. Provide complete details of the purpose of your visit, the products involved and what arrangements are required. With this information, the commercial staff will be pleased to arrange a tentative itinerary, appointment schedules and other pertinent details of your visit to maximize the use of available time. You may also wish to contact the Bureau of Latin America and Caribbean Affairs, Trade Development, at the Department of External Affairs in Ottawa.

As noted, it is often necessary to travel outside Bogota and time should be allowed for this. An absolute minimum of three days in Bogota is required.

### When to Go

Almost any season is suitable depending on the area to be visited. Remember that the climate changes considerably with the altitude. Mid-December to mid-January and Holy Week are popular holiday periods and travel should be avoided. Bogota does not celebrate Carnival but other cities do, particularly Barranquilla. Visitors should check the list of holidays since many businessmen will take a long week-end when holidays fall on Monday-Tuesday or Thursday-Friday.

### How to Get There

There are good air connections from Eastern Canada via New York and Miami, and from Western Canada through Los Angeles. There are also good connections with the other major cities of Latin America through Mexico City, Panama, Caracas, Quito, Lima and Sao Paulo.

### Travel in Colombia

Most business travel in Colombia is by air because of communication problems, in mountainous terrain. Air routes are well developed. Rail and road travel have traditionally been slow and are not recommended although improvements are underway.

Taxis are inexpensive and most are metered. Radio taxis as well as tourist taxis are available although the latter usually charge double the normal rate. It is wise to retain a taxi by the hour when on a tight schedule. The Commercial Division of the Embassy can assist in this regard.

## Hotels

There are good hotels throughout Colombia, ranging from first class members of the international chains in principal cities, to the rather modest in smaller centres. Prices vary according to class and location and also, in some cities, according to season.

### Principal hotels in the major cities are:

Bogota: Continental, Hilton, Tequendama, San Francisco, Cordillera, Presidente.

Barranquilla: El Prado Intercontinental, Astoria, Central.

Cartagena: Del Caribe, San Felipe, Hilton, Capilla del Mar.

Cali: Alferiz Real, Aristi, Intercontinental, New York, Adriatico, Guadalajara, Monasterio.

Medellin: Nutibara, Europe, Hotel Intercontinental Medellin.

## Income Tax Clearance

Income tax clearance is not required for tourists. Income earned and paid inside Colombia, such as consulting fees, would be subject to tax. An income tax clearance is also required for foreign businessmen who visit with a business visa, whether they earned a remuneration from Colombian sources or not.

## Travel Documents

Canadian tourists, in addition to a valid passport, require a tourist card which is available from Colombian consulates and offices of Avianca. This also applies to businessmen who only intend to survey the market and make contacts. Businessmen intending to actually write orders or to engage in other remunerative activity may require a business visa. An application for this visa should be made to a Colombian consulate or embassy well in advance of the trip. A tourist cannot change his visa status while in Colombia except in very rare cases and then only with the approval of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A business visa however, can mean unnecessary hassle if you just want to

visit the country without intending to obtain a remuneration while there.

## Business Calls and Entertainment

Depending on circumstances, two to four calls a day, plus a lunch, is a reasonable schedule. However, one must make allowance for delays caused by traffic problems or prolonged discussions. Many Colombian businessmen speak English and interpreter services are available when required in large hotels or, on advance request, through the Commercial Division of the Embassy.

Business entertainment usually includes lunch, cocktails or dinner at hotels or well-known restaurants and, to a lesser extent, private clubs if a Colombian is the host. If invited to a Colombian home it is customary to send flowers in advance.

## Mail

The Embassy may be used as a mailing address for letters, cables and any materials not subject to duty. Large amounts of literature are usually held at customs and clearance time is lengthy.

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## *VI. Federal Export Programs and Services*

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### Market Advisory Services

The Trade Commissioners in the Canadian Embassy in Bogota will provide assistance to the Canadian exporter and aid foreign buyers in locating Canadian sources of supply. The Trade Commissioner will advise on all phases of marketing, including identification of export opportunities, assessment of market competition, introduction to foreign businessmen and Government officials, screening of agents, guidance on terms of payment and assistance with tariff or access problems.

The Trade Commissioners in Bogota are in constant contact with their counterparts in the Latin America and Caribbean Trade Development office in Ottawa. This office can provide the following type of general information:

- market information, for particular products;
- market access information on tariff rates, regulations, licensing, non-tariff barriers, product standards, required documents etc.;
- publications and country briefs on smaller markets.

If your company requires assistance in identifying Colombian markets for your products, you should contact your nearest Regional Office of the Department of Regional Industrial Expansion (DRIE). These offices, located in each province, assist exporters with market planning and can arrange for the assistance of both the relevant Trade Development Office in Ottawa and the assistance of Trade Commissioners overseas.

### CIDA

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) provides direct support for Canadian companies to investigate industrial co-operation opportunities in developing countries. The program funds proposals by Canadian investors for projects such as joint ventures, licencing agreements, management contracts or other commercial undertakings. For more information, please contact:

Director General  
Industrial Co-operation Division  
Canadian International Development Agency  
200, promenade du Portage  
Hull (Québec) K1A 0G4

Tel: (819) 997-7901  
Telex: 053-4140 CIDA/SEL

## PPP and PEMD

To further Canadian export development objectives, two federal trade promotional programs are available:

- 1) the Promotional Projects Program (PPP) through which the Department of External Affairs plans and implements promotional projects abroad; and
- 2) the Program for Export Market Development (PEMD) through which repayable loans are made to individual companies to cover costs in developing export business which might otherwise not be undertaken.

Through the PPP, Canadian trade fairs abroad, trade missions and trade visits are initiated, organized and implemented by the departments. The range of these activities include participation in international trade fairs, solo shows and in-store promotions; the organizing of technical seminars and trade missions abroad; and the sponsoring of foreign visits to Canada to stimulate the sale of Canadian products in various export markets.

In contrast to the PPP projects, proposals under PEMD are made by Canadian industry rather than the government. Through PEMD, the repayable loans are made to individual companies to cover costs incurred in developing export business, which, because of risks involved, might otherwise discourage such initiatives. PEMD is made up of several sections, each of which is designed to deal more effectively with a particular market in terms of the regions, products or services and marketing techniques concerned. Section A deals with Canadian participation in capital projects abroad; Section B with the export of Canadian products and services; Section C with participation in trade fairs abroad; Section D with the bringing of foreign buyers to Canada; and Section E with the formation of export consortia. In all sections, companies are encouraged to develop self-sustaining export markets for their products. For details see the PEMD brochure.

For further information regarding both the PPP and the PEMD programs, please contact the Office of Trade Development — Latin America and Caribbean, Department of External Affairs.

## EDC

Of importance to Canadian businessmen is the Export Development Corporation (EDC), a Crown Corporation that reports to Parliament through the Minister of State for International Trade.

The main functions of EDC are:

1. to insure the Canadian exporter against nonpayment due to credit or political risks beyond the control of either the exporter or the buyer when export sales are made on normal credit terms. Almost all export transactions are insurable, not only those involving goods or technical services, but also those involving "invisible" exports such as managerial services, advertising programs, the licensing or sale of patents, trademarks, copyrights, and the like;
2. to issue appropriate guarantees to chartered banks or to any person providing nonrecourse supplier financing in respect of an export sale. Guarantees may also be issued in connection with a loan made to a foreign buyer for the purchase of Canadian goods and services;
3. to finance foreign buyers of Canadian capital goods and related services when extended credit terms are necessary and are not available from commercial lenders. Major engineering and other technical services may be financed, even when such sales are not related to the export of goods;
4. to insure Canadian investments abroad against non-commercial risks such as loss through confiscation, expropriation, war or revolution or the inability to repatriate capital or earnings.

For further information on EDC services contact:

EXPORT DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Head Office

110 O'Connor Street

Ottawa, Ontario

K1P 5T9

Tel: (613) 237-2570

Telex: 053-4136



## Publicity

*Canada Commerce* in English, and *Commerce Canada*, the French edition — are published monthly and contain a variety of articles and reports on export opportunities, such as government services to industry, international market conditions and terms of access, industrial development, and joint industry-government efficiency studies. Both publications are available without charge to Canadian companies from The Public Information Directorate, Department of Regional Industrial Expansion (DRIE), Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0H5.

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## *VII. Useful Addresses*

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### Canadian Offices

(In Colombia)

Commercial Division  
Canadian Embassy  
Apartado Aereo 53531/2  
Calle 76 No. 11-52  
Bogota 2, Colombia  
Tel: 235-5066/235-5477  
Telex: (Destination Code 35) 44568 (DMCA CO)  
Cable: CANADIAN

(In Canada)

South America Division  
Bureau of Latin America and Caribbean Affairs  
Trade Development  
Department of External Affairs  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0H5  
Tel: (613) 996-5546  
Telex: 053 3745

Canadian Association — Latin America and Caribbean  
(CALA)  
42 Charles Street East  
8th Floor  
Toronto, Ontario  
M4Y 1T4  
Tel: (416) 964-6068  
Telex: 065-24034

Canadian International Development Agency  
Place du Centre  
200 Promenade du Portage  
Hull, Quebec  
K1A 0G4  
Tel: (613) 997-5456  
Telex: 053-4140

## Colombian Offices in Canada

### Embassy of Colombia

Suite 2212  
320 Queen Street  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1R 5A3  
Tel: (613) 230-3760

### Consul General of Colombia

3rd Floor  
9 Hazelton Avenue  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5R 1E2  
Tel: (416) 922-0140

### Consul General of Colombia

1500 Stanley Street  
Montreal, Quebec  
H3A 1R2  
Tel: (514) 849-4852

### Honorary Consul of Colombia

2705W-22nd Avenue  
Vancouver, British Columbia  
V6L 1M5  
Tel: (604) 738-6710

## Main Hotels in Bogota

### Hotel Bogota Hilton

Carrera 7 No. 32-16  
Bogota, Colombia  
Tel: 32 60 20

### Hotel Continental

Avenida Jiménez No. 4-16  
Bogota, Colombia  
Tel: 82 11 00 and 41 10 88

### Hotel Tequendama

Carrera 10 No. 26-21  
Bogota, Colombia  
Tel: 82 30 66 and 81 20 60

## The Royal Bank Affiliate Branches

### The Royal Bank of Canada

Carrera 8, Avenida Jiménez  
Bogota, Colombia  
Tel: 282-0077

The Royal Bank of Canada  
Carrera 15 No. 88-13  
Apartado Aera 3438  
Bogota, Colombia  
Tel: 282-3186

## Regional Offices (ITC/DREE)

Alberta	The Cornerpoint Building Suite 505 10179-105th Street Edmonton, Alberta T5J 3S3 Tel: (403) 420-2944 Telex: 037-2762
British Columbia	Bentall Postal Station P.O. Box 49178 1101-1055 Dunsmuir Street Tower IV Vancouver, British Columbia V7X 1K8 Tel: (604) 666-1434 Telex: 045-1191
Manitoba	P.O. Box 981 400-3 Lakeview Square 185 Carlton Street Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 2V2 Tel: (204) 949-2300 Telex: 075-7624
New Brunswick	Assumption Place 770 Main Street P.O. Box 1210 Moncton, New Brunswick E1C 8P9 Tel: (506) 388-6411 Telex: 014-2200
Newfoundland	Parsons Building 90 O'Leary Avenue P.O. Box 8950 St. John's, Newfoundland A1B 3R9 Tel: (709) 772-4866 Telex: 016-4626

Nova Scotia	<p>Queen Square  45 Alderney Drive  11th Floor  P.O. Box 1320  Dartmouth, Nova Scotia  B2Y 4B9  Tel: (902) 426-3458  Telex: 019-22525</p>
Ontario	<p>One First Canadian Place  Suite 4840, P.O. Box 98  Toronto, Ontario  M5X 1B1  Tel: (416) 365-3737  Telex: 065-24378</p>
Prince Edward Island	<p>134 Kent Street  Suite 400  Confederation Court Mall  P.O. Box 1115  Charlottetown, P.E.I.  C1A 7M8  Tel: (902) 892-8551  Telex: 014-44129</p>
Québec	<p>Stock Exchange Building  800 Victoria Square  Room 3709  P.O. Box 247  Montréal (Québec)  H4Z 1E8  Tel: (514) 283-5938  Telex: 052-5737</p>
Saskatchewan	<p>Bessborough Tower  601 Spadina Crescent East  Room 814  Saskatoon, Saskatchewan  S7K 3G8  Tel: (306) 665-4318  Telex: 074-2742</p>
Yukon and Northwest Territories	<p>Bessborough Tower  601 Spadina Crescent East  Room 814  Saskatoon, Saskatchewan  S7K 3G8  Tel: (306) 665-4358  Telex: 071-2745</p>

# EXPORT DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

## Head Office

Export Development Corporation  
110 O'Connor Street  
Ottawa, Ontario  
Mailing address: P.O. Box 655  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1P 5T9

Tel: (613) 237-2570  
Cable: EXCREDCORP  
Telex: 053-4146  
Facsimile: (613) 237-2690

## Vancouver

Export Development Corporation  
Suite 1030, One Bentall Centre  
505 Burrard Street  
Vancouver, B.C.  
V7X 1M5  
Tel: (604) 688-8658  
Telex: 04-54223  
Facsimile: (604) 688-3710

## Montreal

Export Development Corporation  
Suite 2724, 800 Victoria Square  
P.O. Box 124, Tour de la Bourse  
Montreal, Quebec  
H4Z 1C3  
Tel: (514) 878-1881  
Telex: 05-25618  
Facsimile: (514) 876-2840

## Toronto

Export Development Corporation  
Suite 810, National Bank Building  
P.O. Box 810, 150 York Street  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5H 3S5  
Tel: (416) 364-0135  
Telex: 06-22166  
Facsimile: (416) 360-8443



## Halifax

Export Development Corporation  
Suite 1401

Toronto-Dominion Bank Building  
1791 Barrington Street

Halifax, Nova Scotia

B3J 3L1

Tel: (902) 429-0426

Telex: 019-21502

## Notes



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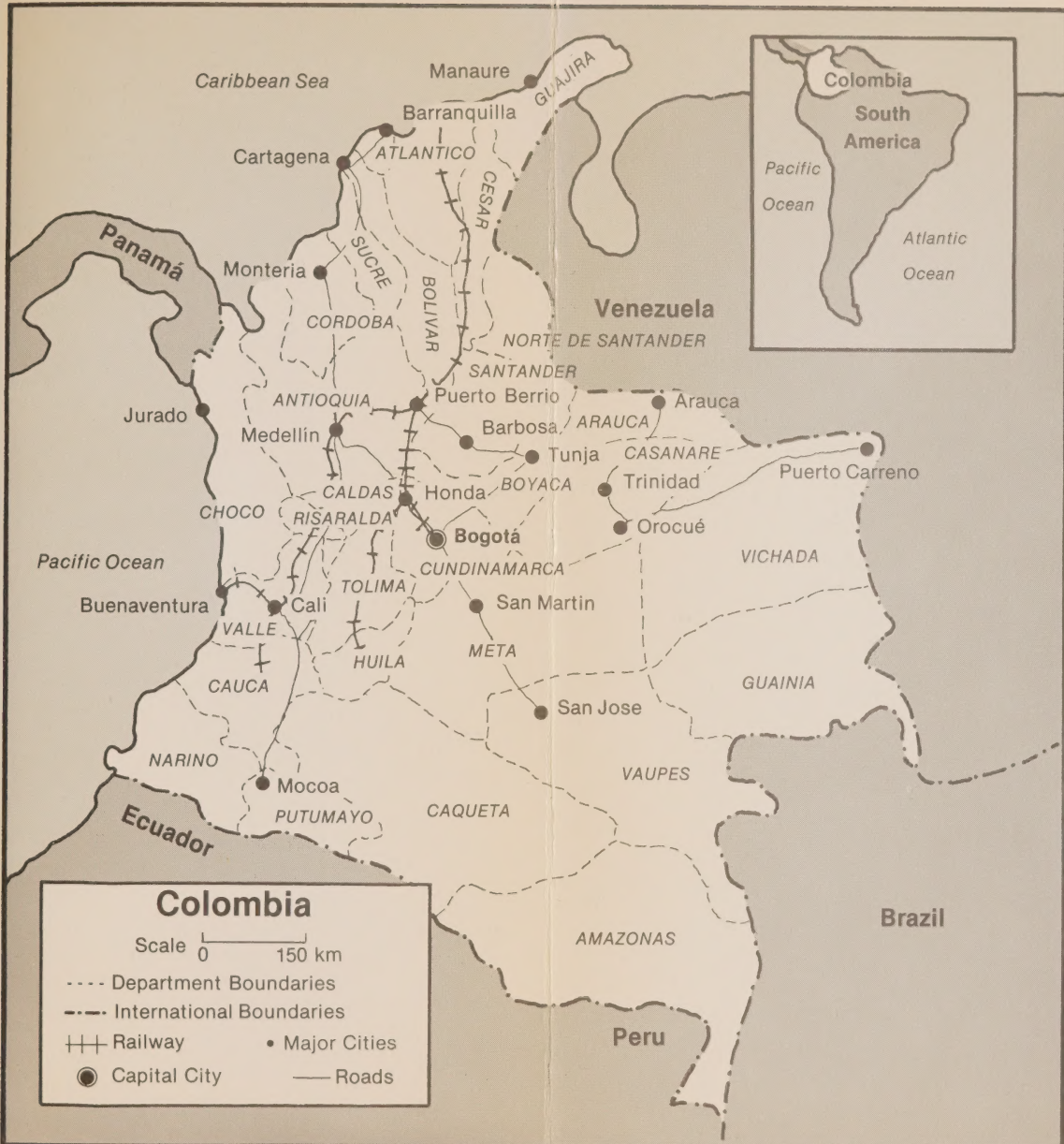


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External Affairs  
Canada

Affaires extérieures  
Canada

Canada